

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 14, Fall 2012
January 30, 2013

Members Present:

Trey Burns (presiding), Brooke Evans (clerk), Clinton Willbanks, Sam Kwiatkowski, Isabelle Lelogeais, Jen Shafer, Nick Uhm, David Kim, Ed Tsai, Daron Stone (observing)

Ombuds: Ira Shrivastava, Gabe Breternitz (observing)

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of unauthorized collaboration on an assignment for a graduate level Engineering course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's Written Statement
- Student B's Written Statement
- Course Syllabus
- Assignment Prompt
- Student A's Submission
- Student B's Submission
- TA Deposition
- Expert Deposition
- Student B's Previous Draft with TA Comment

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."
Student B pled "In Violation."

Testimony:

Student A stated that she sent Student B the link to a dropbox containing her completed code. She said she decided to do this because Student B is her friend and she wanted to help out; she also thought that Student B would only use the code as a reference, rather than copy code directly into her own submission.

Student B stated that she copied Student A's code. She said that did some of the assignment on her own but copied a lot of Student A's code in the most critical parts of the assignment. Student B pointed out that, because this assignment was split between partners, the weight of the submission in question was only 5% of the overall course grade, as opposed to 10% as stated in the syllabus. Student B also stated that her partner for this assignment – who had not been accused - had no knowledge of her actions.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members agreed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because both students testified that they were members of different groups and shared code used for a project. It is explicitly stated in the Honor Code Policy for the course that code is not to be shared between groups. Members also stated that the expert deposition, which emphatically stated that a violation occurred, supported this decision.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed a violation. Members agreed that Student A's testimony and written statement show that she committed a violation by sharing her code with Student B.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is "In Violation?"

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Then, the Council then discussed whether or not Student B committed the violation. Members agreed that Student B's testimony and written statement show that she committed a violation by receiving Student B's code, as well as taking material from it and inserting it into her own code.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is "In Violation?"

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances for Student A. Council members discussed mitigating for Student A for the weight of assignment - it was worth between 5 and 10%. Members also stated that they would mitigate for cooperation because Student A was truthful and able to guide the council through what happened.

Council members saw no reason to aggravate Student A's penalty in this case.

In discussing an appropriate penalty for Student A, members agreed that some sort of grade reduction was warranted since she consciously made the decision to give Student B access to her code despite the fact that she knew this was not allowed by the course Honor Code.

Vote: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	7
1 letter grade reduction:	2
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Council members then moved on to discussions concerning Student B's penalty, beginning with a discussion on mitigating circumstances. Council members said they would mitigate for the weight of the assignment for the same reasons stated above. Some members of the Council also stated that they would mitigate for Student B's cooperation.

Council members saw no reason to aggravate Student B's penalty in this case.

In discussing an appropriate penalty for Student B, members stated that her penalty should be higher because the violation she committed was more severe than what Student A did – she not only asked for Student A's code, she also copied major portions of it into her own submission. Members agreed that a 3 letter grade reduction would adequately reflect the need for a higher penalty while still serving as an appropriate penalty for the violation Student B committed.

Vote: What is the appropriate penalty for Student B?

F in the course:	0
3 letter grade reduction:	9
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A "In Violation" of the Honor Code and recommends that she receive a 2 letter grade reduction in the course. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

The Honor Council thus finds Student B "In Violation" of the Honor Code and recommends that she receive a 3 letter grade reduction in the course. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour

Respectfully submitted,
Brooke Evans
Clerk